

Tulane National Primate Research Center Investigation
Deputy Administrator Visit
April 2015

Background:

In November of 2014, two non-human primates (rhesus macaques) at Tulane National Primate Research Center (TNPRC) were infected with *Burkholderia pseudomallei* (Bp) and one of them was euthanized. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Bp is not transmitted between humans or animals making the likelihood of becoming ill from the bacteria low. TNPRC was unsure how the macaques became infected. CDC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) were brought in to investigate. In February, EPA mobilized to the site and developed a sampling plan for the collection of air, water and soil samples in targeted areas in and around the macaque enclosures where the bacteria would most likely be present were it to have been released outside the laboratory. TNPRC implemented the plan and CDC conducted the analysis. All samples collected were negative for the presence of Bp. On March 13, CDC released a statement saying, "CDC has found no evidence to date to suggest the organism was released into the surrounding environment and therefore it's unlikely there is any threat to the general population."

Status:

State of Louisiana and TNPRC continue to request additional assistance from EPA in the development of a decontamination plan for the soils in the field cages and for development of an off-site soils and water sampling plan. EPA Region 6 and the EPA Consequence Management and Advisory Division (CMAD) staff have provided additional technical advice on the development of the decontamination plan.

Next Steps:

Region 6 and CMAD will provide advice TNPRC and the State of Louisiana as they develop Sampling and Analysis plans for future sampling events which coincide with the USDA livestock and wildlife sampling and monitoring activities.